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AN ALPINE VARIETY OF *HOUSTONIA CAERULEA*.

ARTHUR STANLEY PEASE AND ALBERT HANFORD MOORE.

THE striking white flowers of *Houstonia caerulea* in Tuckerman's Ravine have long attracted the attention of the numerous persons who travel through it every year, whether botanists or not, since these flowers form a very conspicuous part of the flora of the ravine.¹ The beautiful white color of the corolla, and brilliant yellow of the throat and upper part of the tube have for a long time led the authors to wonder if the plant in question might not be distinct from the lowland species. Several collections and a careful study at the Gray Herbarium have confirmed this suspicion.

The variety of Tuckerman's Ravine and the Alpine Garden may be readily distinguished by the color characters above referred to, together with the shape of the corolla tube. In the case of the alpine variety, the tube tapers gradually downward from the limb to the base without any striking differentiation into a broader and narrower portion. In the common variety, on the other hand, there is a long, straight, much more exerted tube, and then an abrupt, but usually narrow, funnel-like broadening just beneath the border. The following measurements, while not practicable for purposes of identification, are interesting evidences of the distinctness of the two phases. A careful series of measurements of the breadth of the corolla-tube at the widest portion, immediately below the limb, and the total length of the tube shows that, while individual measurements in both plants overlap, the averages are quite different. The average width in the mountain variety was found to be 2.04 mm. and the average length 3.41 mm. In the lowland plant these figures were respectively 1.80 and 4.58 mm.

¹ Cf. G. S. Miller in Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. xxvi, 178 (Feb. 7, 1894) foot-note, "A very large, pale form, apparently distinct from the lowland plant."

The average ratio in the first instance was .59 and in the second .39. The measurements of the width range from 1.25–3 mm., those of the length from 3–4 mm. for the new variety, but from 1–2.75 mm. and 3–6 mm. respectively for the common variety.

Houstonia caerulea is described by Linnaeus as being blue. The ordinary lowland plant is not infrequently white, and has always a yellow throat, but this feature is not so striking, and it has the customary corolla-tube of the Bluet. It is presumably this phase which is referred to by Millspaugh in *Flora of West Virginia*, 375 (1892) as *Houstonia caerulea* f. *albiflora*, but it is listed without description.

The authors take great pleasure in dedicating the variety, whose characterization follows, to the late Edwin Faxon and to Charles Edward Faxon, now connected with the Arnold Arboretum, two brothers, whose collections of the flora of Mount Washington and vicinity have been among the most extensive and valuable in recent years.

HOUSTONIA CAERULEA L. var. **Faxonorum** Pease et Moore var. nov.

Flores candidi, faucibus flavissimis; corollae tubus sensim a limbo usque ad basim constrictus; tubi maxima latitudo 1.25–3 mm. (plerumque 2.04), longitudo 3–4 mm. (plerumque 3.41). Distributio in alpinis Montium Alborum.

Houstonia serpyllifolia Grah. (not Michx.) in *Bot. Mag.* lv, pl. 2822 (1828). Here the above variety is clearly figured. For an illustration of the type see *Bot. Mag.* xi, pl. 370 (1797).

Type specimen: NEW HAMPSHIRE, Coös County, Headwall of Tuckerman's Ravine, Sargent's Purchase, July 29, 1907 (*A. H. Moore*, no. 4047 in *Herb. Moore*. Co-types in *Herbb. Gray*, Pease, and Bartlett).

Other specimens examined: NEW HAMPSHIRE, Coös County, Headwall of Tuckerman's Ravine, Sargent's Purchase, August 14, 1902 (*A. H. Moore*, no. 291) and August 28, 1907 (*A. S. Pease*, no. 10732); Alpine Garden, Sargent's Purchase, August 19, 1907 (*A. S. Pease*, no. 10558); Mt. Washington, within 2–300 ft. of summit, Sargent's Purchase, August 6, 1897 (*W. Deane*).

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS.